last year and rising stars. In the category of rising star, India has been ranked fifth.

(b) Tourism in India has grown steadily in the last few years, with the number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India increasing to 5.08 million in 2007 from 2.38 million in 2002 with a compounded annual growth rate of 16.4%.

(c) to (f) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance for project proposals submitted by the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations that are complete as per scheme guidelines, subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priority.

The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Rs.3.80 crore for the promotion of destination Outer Seraj in Kullu District during the financial year 2007-08.

Devastating flood in Bihar

1687. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that recent devastating floods in Bihar caused a heavy loss of life and property and damage to embankments of rivers, roads and bridges;

(b) how much monetary help extended by the Central Government to the State Government of Bihar to repair the damage caused by flash floods; and

(c) the measures being taken by Government to save the State from flash floods by controlling flood water and how much money has been released by the Central Government till now for rehabilitation work in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Government is aware that recent devastating flood in Bihar due to breach in eastern afflux bund of Kosi barrage caused heavy loss of life and property.

(b) and (c) For repairs of eastern afflux bund an advance amount of Rs. 39.90 crore was released to the Government of Bihar. In addition an amount of Rs.1000 crore has been released by the Ministry of Home Affairs from National Contingency Fund (NCCF) to the Government of Bihar for relief and rehabilitation works.

Cause of flood in Kosi river

1688. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ:
Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) what was the cause of the flooding of Bihar by the Kosi river; and

(b) what steps are proposed to ensure no recurrence in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Eastern Afflux Bund of Kosi Barrage at Kusaha (Nepal) was breached on 18th August, 2008 causing flooding in Bihar by the Kosi river.

(b) A High Level Expert Team headed by the Chairman, Central Water Commission has been constituted by Government of India, to suggest the remedial measures to avoid occurrence of such incidents in future.

Status of special category States under AIBP

1689. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain States are eligible for special category status under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether in view of two-third of area of Rajasthan being of the Thar Desert and declared as drought and famine prone area, the Union Government proposes to confer the special status to Rajasthan under AIBP alongwith other eligible States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by when the special status is likely to be conferred?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) North Eastern States, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir are classified as special category States under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP). In addition, undivided Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts of Orissa are also treated at par with special category States under AIBP.

(c) and (d) In order to give a boost to irrigation development in the drought prone area of the country including the State of Rajasthan, the Government of India has made provisions in the AIBP guidelines amended in December 2006. In accordance with the existing guidelines, irrigation projects benefiting drought prone area are eligible for receiving 90% grant of the project cost which is at par with the special category States. Further, in normal cases, a new project could be included in AIBP only on completion of an ongoing project of the State under AIBP *i.e.* on one to one basis. However, the project benefiting drought prone area could be considered for inclusion in AIBP in relaxation to one to one criteria.

Sindhu basin

1690. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:

SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Kutch region of Gujarat is also a part of Sindhu Basin;

(b) whether Government of India has received representation dated 7 February, 2008 from the State Government of Gujarat that since the Kutch region of Gujarat has conditions similar to Rajasthan, the Indus water should be reallocated so that Gujarat is also allotted waters proportionately; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government of India and reaction of the water-sharing States thereto?